“Bearing Witness: Life and Justice for All”

Policy Webinar

January 15, 2020
Facts on Firearm Deaths

• Approximately 40,000 people die in firearm-related deaths each year.
  • About the same number of deaths as those who die each year from breast cancer or car accidents.

• About 1/3 of firearm-related deaths are homicides; 2/3 are suicides.
Universal Background Checks

• Federal law requires background checks when purchasing firearms from a licensed dealer, but not at a gun show, certain online purchases, or private sales. Some states require background checks in these instances, but many do not.

• Research shows that closing the background check loopholes will reduce gun trafficking.

• Broad bipartisan support for universal background checks: 93% of Democrats and 82% of Republicans according to the Pew Survey.
Extreme Risk Protection Orders ("ERPOs")

- Extreme Risk Protections Orders, sometimes called “red flag” laws, allow family members or law enforcement to petition a judge for an order to remove firearms temporarily from someone’s possession when that person is a threat to themselves or others.

- Research shows ERPOs decrease the gun suicide rate. For every 10-20 ERPOs issued, one life is saved. Another study found ERPO laws contribute to a 7.5% reduction in gun-related suicide.

- Suicide attempts with a gun result in death about 90% of the time; the overwhelming majority of people who attempt by other means survive.

- 70% of Republicans and 85% of Democrats support family-initiated ERPOs; 66% of Republicans and 78% of Democrats support police-initiated ERPOs.
Gun Violence: Learn More


Extend New START

• US and Russia hold 90% of world’s nuclear weapons
• New START now limits number of nuclear warheads and allows for inspections of each other’s nuclear facilities and data exchange
• If New START expires in February 2021, no limits on US and Russian nuclear arsenals for first time since 1972 and lack of transparency that can lead to instability and risk of nuclear “accidents”
• Extending New START is in US national security interest
• Urge bipartisan support for H.R. 2529 and S. 2394 that extend New START as a way to reduce nuclear threat
Less Funding for Arms Race

• Administration wants to expand nuclear arsenal so costs estimated at $500 billion over next 10 years

• Overall US defense spending has steadily increased
  - $750 billion authorized for FY2020 – 15% increase over FY 2019

• US spends more on defense/military than the combined total of next 8-9 countries (including China, Russia, France, Germany, UK, Saudi Arabia, India)
The United States spends more on defense than the next seven countries combined.

DEFENSE SPENDING (BILLIONS OF DOLLARS)

$609 Billion

$649 Billion

China

Saudi Arabia

India

France

Russia

United Kingdom

Germany

NOTES: Figures are in U.S. dollars, converted from local currencies using market exchange rates. Data for the United States are for fiscal year 2018, which ran from October 1, 2017 through September 30, 2018. Data for the other countries are for calendar year 2018.

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New START “Ask”

• Urge Congress to support H.R. 2529 and S. 2394 that extend New START as a way to:
  -- advance nuclear non-proliferation and
  -- avoid a nuclear arms race
International Asks

• Preserve funding for fiscal year 2021 to at least fiscal year 2020 approved levels for poverty-reducing development and humanitarian programs.

• We urge Congress to ensure any policy realignment prioritizes assistance to the people and communities most in need; maintains U.S. global leadership; and encourages pro-poor economic growth.
U.S. Federal Spending: FY 2019
Congressional Budget Office

2019 Mandatory Spending Breakdown (% of Total)
- Social Security: 38%
- Medicare: 15%
- Income Security: 16%
- Medicaid: 11%
- Veterans Benefits: 4%
- Other: 4%

Total Mandatory: $2,739 Billion

2019 Discretionary Spending Breakdown (% of Total)
- Defense: 52%
- Non-Defense: 48%

Total Discretionary: $1,305 Billion
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<th>Appropriations Accounts ($ in thousands) (OCO included)</th>
<th>FY 19 Enacted</th>
<th>FY 20 Enacted</th>
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<td>Malaria</td>
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<td>COMBINED TOTAL</td>
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International Asks

• Preserve funding for fiscal year 2021 to at least fiscal year 2020 proposed levels for poverty-reducing development and humanitarian programs.

• Ensure that international assistance retains its focus on reducing poverty in the poorest and most conflict prone countries of the world.
On Nov. 12, 2019 the U.S. Supreme Court (SCOTUS) heard oral arguments on the legality of the Deferred Action Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program and its attempted rescission by the Administration.

SCOTUS will likely issue a decision in Spring 2020 and two likely scenarios exist:

- If Scotus terminates the DACA program there will be pressure on the Senate before their summer recess to pass legislation to prevent DACA recipients from facing deportation because the House has already passed H.R. 6, the American Dream and Promise Act, which the USCCB endorsed.

- If SCOTUS upholds DACA, we could see a renewed effort by the Administration to implement a proper regulation ending DACA that likely published in Summer 2020.
Background: The Stakes are High

• Approximately 800,000 young people – many of whom are Catholic – have qualified and enrolled in the DACA program.

• With DACA, these individuals have been able to come out of the shadows to work and attend school legally and not fear separation from their families due to deportation.

• Terminating of DACA would make it difficult to quickly replace such protections for all current 690,000 DACA holders via legislation or other means.
S. 874, the Dream Act of 2019

• USCCB supports S. 874, the Dream Act of 2019.

• Is a bi-partisan bill and currently has five co-sponsors: Durbin D-IL, Murkowski R-AK, Schumer D-NY, Gardner R-CO, Cortez-Masto D-NV.

• Most Rev. Joe S. Vásquez, Former Chairman, USCCB Committee on Migration:

“My brother bishops and I believe in protecting the dignity of every human being, particularly that of our children. The Catholic Bishops have long supported these immigrant youth and their families who are contributors to our economy, academic standouts in our universities, and leaders in our parishes. These youth have grown up in our country, some even choosing to put their lives on the line to serve in our armed forces. They truly exemplify the extraordinary contributions that immigrants can provide to our nation. It is both our moral duty and, in our nation’s best interest to protect these youth and allow them to reach their God-given potential.”
Why Support the Dream Act?

• DACA recipients (sometimes called Dreamers) are undocumented individuals who were brought to the U.S. as children by their parents. They grew up in the U.S. and many of them remember little, if anything, about where they were born. They are American in everything but immigration status.

• DACA recipients are among the most “extremely vetted” immigrants in the U.S. The government knows they have not previously committed any felonies, knows where they live and work, how much they pay in taxes, and know if they leave the country and return.

• If SCOTUS ends the DACA program this year and there is no legislation that has passed Congress, DACA youth will face an uncertain future and maybe even deportation and family separation.

• The USCCB has long supported Dreamers, and we continue to urge Congress to work with all deliberate speed towards a bipartisan legislative solution that includes a path to citizenship for these youth.

• Let’s remember and live by the teaching in Leviticus 19:34:

  The foreigner living with you must be treated as one of your native born. Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt.
• QUESTIONS?